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ARTICLES:

- (1) Letter from President Bush to Prime Minister Aso thanking Japan for dispatch of SDF to Iraq

SANKEI (Internet edition) (Full)
January 9, 2009

The government today announced that President Bush had sent a letter to Prime Minister Aso thanking Japan for its contributions to Iraq's reconstruction, starting with the dispatch of the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to that country. The letter came on Jan. 7. In it, Mr. Bush wrote this about the SDF: "Japan should be proud to have joined a successful support operation that helped bring freedom and democracy to Iraq, and recently, the lessening of violence."

He also touched on the two Foreign Ministry diplomats, including Ambassador Oku, who were killed by armed insurgents, offering his condolences. "We will not forget their sacrifices," he wrote.

(2) Lineup of Asia policymaking team in Obama administration reflects strong expectations of Japan (Part 1)

ASAHI (Page 2) (Full)
January 19, 2009

(Yoichi Kato, Washington)

The incoming Obama administration has decided to appoint Harvard University Professor Joseph Nye, a heavyweight Democrat knowledgeable about Japan, as ambassador to Japan. The administration has also decided to give working-level posts in major government institutions to those well-versed in Japanese affairs, including Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Kurt Campbell. These selections reflect the incoming administration's strong expectations

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that Japan will play a role as its partner on equal footing.

Nye known as heavyweight knowledgeable about Japan

Regarding the selection of Nye as ambassador to Japan, an informed source said: "In the Democratic Party, there is no big-wig politician whom the administration wants to send to Japan." Successive administrations of the Democratic Party designated politicians who had reached the very top in the U.S. political world were designated as ambassador to Japan, including former Vice President Mondale and former House of Representatives Speaker Foley. These selections represent the administrations' stance of prioritizing Japan as its ally. Among the incumbent Democratic politicians, however, there is no suitable candidate with a similar status, according to the source.

If Nye is officially nominated as ambassador to Japan, he will be the first academic-turned ambassador since the late Edwin O. Reischauer. Nye has already produced remarkable academic works. In addition, he served as assistant secretary of defense in charge of East Asian and Oceanian affairs under the Clinton administration from 1994 through 1995, during which, he had to handle the case of a school girl raped by U.S. military personnel in Okinawa.

Persons connected with the incoming administration are worried about the fact that some Japanese have voiced anxiety about or distrust in the administration. Some persons have fear that the next administration might prioritize experts on China over those on Japan in the Asia policymaking team. Others speculate that the new administration might move in the direction of protectionism.

Further, certain Japanese government officials have deplored that there is no shoulder to lean on, like former Deputy Secretary of State Armitage in the first-term Bush administration.

The Obama camp has sent a message at every opportunity promising to attach importance to Japan-U.S. relations. Hearing negative views in Japan despite these messages, some on the U.S. side have expressed their irritation.

Under this circumstance, Nye is indisputably an ideal person to assume the ambassadorship in Japan. He is expected to be welcomed by the Japanese people with respect and to be able to send assurances to them.

Nye has advocated that not only "hard power" but "soft power" as well should be used as a diplomatic tool. His stress on the use of "smart power" coincides with President-elect Obama's views.

In terms of his status, achievement and knowledge, Nye is fully qualified to be ambassador to Japan and serve as proxy for the president.

(3) Lineup of Asia policymaking team in Obama administration reflects strong expectations of Japan (Part 2)

ASAHI (Page 2) (Full)
January 9, 2009

(Yoichi Kato, Washington)

Consideration also to China

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The assistant secretaries in charge of East Asian and Pacific affairs of the Defense Department and the State Department are responsible for drawing up diplomatic and security policies toward Japan and Asia of the U.S. government. The senior Asian director at the National Security Council (NSC) is in charge of coordination work.

The Obama administration announced yesterday that it has tapped Jeffrey Bader as senior Asian director at the NSC, Kurt Campbell as assistant secretary of state, and Wallace Gregson as assistant secretary of defense. These three will be key members of the Obama administration in administering Asia policy.

This lineup demonstrates the administration's great consideration to Japan. Campbell dealt with the incident of a schoolgirl raped by U.S. military personnel in Okinawa in 1995, and he engaged in negotiations on re-defining the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty in 1996 as deputy assistant secretary of defense during the Clinton administration.

Gregson, an elite member of the Marines, tackled Asian and Pacific issues under Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Campbell. He also has many years of experience in Okinawa, so he is familiar with U.S. military base issues. Campbell and Gregson are experts on dealing with problems related to the maintenance of the Japan-U.S. alliance, as well as on making defense plans.

To enable Campbell to spend more time handling relations with Japan, an agreement has been reached to set up in the Department of State a special envoy for the North Korean nuclear issue when the Obama administration is inaugurated, according to informed sources. This decision was made in response to criticism that Assistant Secretary of State Hill was too busy dealing with North Korean issues to handle other Asian issues. The selection for the post of special envoy has yet to be completed, but Campbell, if appointed as assistant secretary of state, will surely be able to spend more time handling relations with Japan and China.

While giving priority to Japan, the lineup also shows consideration to a balance in the entire Asia and Pacific region. By awarding the post at the NSC to Bader, a well-known China expert, the administration is apparently aiming to come up with policies also giving consideration to China and other Asian countries.

In the Democratic Party's presidential primary, Campbell supported Hillary Clinton (incoming state secretary), while Bader was one of the leading figures in the Obama camp from the very beginning of the campaign. Obama's strong confidence in Bader is likely to increase his influence.

(4) Post-Iraq challenges (Part A): Former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage -- Japan must present what it wants to do to the United States

YOMIURI (Page 12) (Full)

January 9, 2009

Interviewed by Satoshi Ogawa, Washington

I am very proud of the fact that the Japanese government dispatched Ground Self-Defense Force troops to Samawah, Iraq, to provide

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reconstruction support and had the Air Self-Defense Force engage in an airlift mission from Kuwait to Iraq. The fact that they have joined the most difficult task of this period is vital for Japan, and it has heightened assessments of the SDF and the Japanese people. As far as Japan and the United States are concerned, I believe the United States has deepened its respect for the SDF's performance and the SDF has increased its respect for the United States that has been engaged in painstaking, dirty, and dangerous work around the world.

The United States wants to see Japan provide as much support as possible in Afghanistan, as well. The Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean helped not only the United States but also other relevant countries, including Pakistan and India. Although they all truly appreciated it, there is a need to provide assistance on the mainland (Afghanistan) by using CH-47 transport helicopters and C-130 cargo planes. Japan has demonstrated that it is capable of providing sufficient support in Iraq. Such should be possible in Afghanistan, as well.

At this point in time, on the eve of the establishment of the Obama administration, my advice to Japan is that you decide in your own country on what you want to do -- rather than coming to the United States to tell you what you cannot do -- and show resolve to the United States. I would like Japan to think of "boots on the ground" by sending personnel to Afghanistan.

I would like to point out that besides military boots, there are all sorts of "boots," such as those of doctors, nurses, construction workers, teachers, police officers. Japan must bear a greater monetary burden and increase its official development assistance budget, but they are only part of many matters Japan can decide on.

I would like Japan to demonstrate a proactive attitude rather than a negative attitude, which it has shown in the past.

It is clear that Article 9 of the Constitution prohibiting the use of the right to collective self-defense has been an impediment to international contributions involving the SDF. But even under Article 9, Japan has worked things out several times, demonstrating it had the political will. Japan was able to dispatch police officers to Cambodia and units with military capability to the Golan Heights, Samawah, and the Indian Ocean.

Over the last year or so, Japan has had a total of three prime ministers, and the government is now paralyzed. The problem is that making decisions as a state is extremely difficult. The Liberal Democratic Party has problems, but it is unclear whether the Democratic Party of Japan is powerful enough to defeat the LDP in an election. This problem would linger on for several years until the political system is realigned. But the international situation cannot wait for Japan that long.

Even if Japan does not carry out (SDF) assistance in Afghanistan, that does not mean an end to the U.S.-Japan alliance. But such would be regarded as inappropriate as a country holding a two-year (non-permanent) seat on the UN Security Council that started this year.

Next year marks the 50th anniversary of the revision of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. The United States and Japan have not released a clear joint declaration since the Joint Declaration on

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Security of 1996. (Next year) would provide an ideal opportunity to discuss efforts to strengthen the alliance, and I strongly hope that

a new joint declaration will be formulated.

(5) Verbal agreement between U.S. and North Korea major bone of contention; Failure to codify verification protocol

ASAHI (Page 10) (Full)
January 8, 2009

The Six-Party Talks on North Korea's nuclear program failed to codify the verification protocol of North Korea's nuclear program. Last October, the United States and North Korea agreed on the method of verification measures through bilateral talks, and in December, the heads of the delegations of the six countries held talks in which the North refused to clearly state in writing what it had agreed to the United States in October. What happened in between?

North Korea agreed to three points

The purpose of the visit to Pyongyang by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill was to prevent the North from producing plutonium. He did this by reaching an accord on verification measures in exchange for a promise to remove the North from the U.S. list of states sponsoring terrorism. However, Pyongyang was adamant about not codifying the verification protocol, insisting that what it would do was to present documents with operating records, as well as to allow on-site inspections of nuclear facilities and interviews with relevant officials.

Under such circumstances, what cropped up was a verbal agreement on verification measures. The verbal accord consisted of three points: 1) North Korea accepted the verification of nuclear development using highly-enriched uranium (HEU); 2) the North unconditionally allowed verification at 21 facilities it had declared, as well as at unreported nuclear sites based on consent by both sides; and 3) the North agreed to use the expression 'sampling of nuclear materials.' The expression 'sampling of nuclear materials,' which became a point of issue later, was changed to 'scientific measures.' A U.S. government official said, however: "North Korea initially accepted to use the sampling (of nuclear materials)."

The North hardened its stance

Following the verbal commitment, the U.S. government delisted North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism. However, the verbal agreement came under criticism for being ambiguous. The U.S. government then began groping for supplementary documentation.

At bilateral talks between the United States and North Korea in November, North Korean Foreign Ministry American Affairs Bureau Director General Li Gun suggested: "We cannot say that we agreed on the expression 'sampling.' How about using sampling as meaning scientific measures?" The U.S. side felt it had scored a hit. But before Li returned home, North Korea denied that it had made the proposal by releasing a statement by the Foreign Ministry's spokesperson. The officials concerned were perplexed by North Korea's incoherent response.

Washington's revelation of the verbal accord was the reason behind a change in Pyongyang's stand. A source familiar with the Six-Party Talks said: "North Korea began to have a distrust of the United

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States."

Even so, Hill, who wanted to reach an agreement, held talks with North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan on Dec. 4 in Singapore. A plan he had in mind was to resolve the issue by producing an attached annex with closed doors. Kim, however, stubbornly insisted that things should be pushed ahead based on the agreement reached in Pyongyang. Kim proposed that the wording 'scientific measures' be changed to 'all measures necessary for the verification of the protocol,' while refusing to use the word "sampling." The U.S. government was disappointed at Pyongyang's response.

Six-Party Talks failed

The chief negotiators of the Six-Party Talks gathered in Beijing on Dec. 8. A source familiar with the talks said: "Mr. Hill did not show any spunk." On the morning of the 9th, China distributed a draft on the verification protocol. The contents of the draft were even more specific. It is because the draft specified verification procedures such as: 1) launching three measures to which North Korea had agreed; 2) starting scientific measures which meet international standards when the second stage of denuclearization nears completion; 3) at the third stage, initiating verifying facilities that North Korea did not report; and 4) at an advanced stage of the abolishment of nuclear weapons, North Korea would rejoin the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and allow the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to conduct special inspections.

A South Korean government source said: "I'm positive that the document referred to the sampling of materials." Nuclear development using highly-enriched uranium, nuclear proliferation and nuclear weapons were included in the targets subject to verification.

However, North Korea did not even show any interest in the draft document. In a meeting on Dec. 10, Kim refused to accept the document, saying: "Our nuclear capabilities will be unveiled. From national defense and security standpoints, we cannot accept it."

There were no words implying sampling in the chairman statement China presented on Dec. 11. The statement was aimed to complete economic and energy assistance to North Korea. A source familiar with the Six-Party Talks said: "In order to undermine the talks China shifted its stance favoring North Korea." Hill returned to his country rather than waiting until after the talks were over.

(6) Full-scale discussion to begin for revising National Defense Program Guidelines; Emphasis on China, North Korea, and international contributions

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Excerpts)
January 9, 2009

The government's Council on Security and Defense Capabilities, which is composed of experts, will hold its first meeting today to kick off full-fledged discussions on revising the National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) that sets the nation's basic defense policy. The panel will discuss reviews of the disposition of troops, equipment, and the size of the Self-Defense Forces, with an emphasis on responses to China's military buildup, the unclear North Korean situation, and international contributions. It also intends to add more flexibility to the rigid allocation of budgets to the Ground,

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Maritime, and Air Self-Defense Forces.

The council, chaired by Tokyo Electric Power Company President Tsunehisa Katsumata, is scheduled to present a report to Prime Minister Taro Aso by summer. Based on it, the government will draw up a new NDPG and the next Midterm Defense Buildup Program (fiscal 2010 - 2014). Cabinet decisions will be made on them at the end of the year.

The government has been keeping an eye on China whose military spending has been posting two-digit growth and North Korea whose intentions are unclear about abolishing its nuclear programs. At the same time, Russian naval vessels and aircrafts are stepping up activities near Japan's territorial waters and airspace. As seen in the deployment of F-15s at the Naha base, Japan has begun stepping up the "defense of southwest." Japan still needs to build a more effective maritime-and-air warning and surveillance system, including the procurement of (FX) next-generation fighters.

In the wake of the enactment of the basic space law that has opened the door for use of space for defense purposes, the panel is expected to consider the introduction of early-warning satellites to increase the accuracy of a missile defense system. Relaxation of the three principles on arms exports is also expected to become a topic of discussion from a perspective of developing the defense industry and improving technology.

In addition to the SDF's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, the government is studying the possibility of sending troops to waters off Somalia to deal with piracy there as part of Japan's international contribution. Although the importance of international contribution is spelled out in the current NDPG, the panel will discuss the securing of equipment and personnel and the modality of the organization and education, as demand for overseas missions is expected to grow.

The panel will consider the efficient allocation of budgets to the three forces free from sectionalism.

Points at issue for the new National Defense Program Guidelines

? To deal with China's military buildup and the situation in North Korea

0A review of the disposition of troops of the Ground, Maritime, and Air Self-Defense Forces and the flexible allocation of budgets

? To deal with expectations for international contribution

0Reviews of the legal basis for the overseas dispatch of the SDF and of equipment and the system and the definition of the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan

? To deal with technical innovation

Propriety of the introduction of early-warning satellites, easing the three principles that have strictly restricted weapons exports, and the procurement of (FX) next-generation fighters.

(7) Japan should dispatch MSDF vessels to waters off Somalia

YOMIURI (Page 12) (Full)
January 9, 2009

Shinichi Kitaoka, Tokyo University professor

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Though the Self-Defense Forces' (SDF) Iraq mission did not played a major role in assistance for the reconstruction of that nation, it fulfilled a role of firmly maintaining the Japan-U.S. alliance for a limited period, by lending its hand to the U.S. when it was in trouble. The SDF earned the confidence of the international community by acting in an orderly manner. It was a valuable experience in terms of improving its capability of coping with unpredictable incidents.

However, Japan's UN peace-keeping operations are in terrible shape. Only 38 persons were taking part in such operations as of the end of November 2008, ranking Japan 79th in the world, accounting for 0.04 PERCENT of the total number of persons -- approximately 90,000 -- who took part in PKO from all over the world. The Constitution stipulates in the preamble that "we desire to occupy an honored place in an international society and that we believe no nation is responsible to itself alone." From a positive pacifist standpoint, Japan's contribution should come to about 1 PERCENT . It once dispatched several hundreds SDF personnel to PKO in Cambodia. The Ground-Self Defense Force's (GSDF) engineering unit would be most useful. Repairing roads and bridges is no mean contribution. In my view, Japan's dispatch of an engineering unit to Southern Sudan would be appreciated.

One reason that Japan is inactive in international cooperation activities can be found in its legal system. Clause 1 of Article 9 of the Constitution bans the use of force as means of settling international disputes. In view of the development of international laws and the process of the establishment of the Constitution, it is clear that this means a dispute between Japan and another country should not be settled with the use of force. Applying this clause to a case of Japan helping other countries settle their disputes within the UN framework is the misinterpretation of the Constitution. "Emergency escort" in the event of other countries' troops being attacked and the use of weapons in carrying out duties should be approved.

Another problem is the prime minister's leadership. The Cabinet Legislation Bureau, the SDF and the New Komeito are negative about the idea of Japan taking part in international cooperation activities. It is a problem that the prime minister cannot persuade them. The Legislation Bureau wants to maintain the strict interpretation of the Constitution. The SDF wants an impeccable legal base. Isn't it necessary to consider what is needed for national interests and interpret and manage the Constitution in a flexible manner, based on that consideration? The five principles for participation in PKO activities, such as an agreement on ceasefire between parties to a dispute should be interpreted in a flexible manner in accordance with UN operations.

Japan should dispatch Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) troops to anti-piracy operations on waters off Somalia. Maritime state Japan deeply relies on sea lanes. In order to secure the safety of sea lanes, the UN has adopted a resolution legitimatizing activities to do so. It is better to set up a law. However, even now it is possible for Japan to protect commercial ships with defensive action on the seas in accordance with the SDF Law.

Concerning assistance to Afghanistan, too, there is room for the ASDF transportation unit and the GSDF engineering unit to play an active role. Japan should host an international conference and

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discuss the war on terror and reconstruction assistance to encourage the whole world to tackle anti-piracy operations.

In order for Japan to implement international cooperation activities, it is necessary for it to have a permanent law that sets requirements for the dispatch of SDF troops. It should create a framework stipulating types of activities Japan can engage in so that politicians can make decisions, after determining merits and demerits of taking part in anti-piracy operations in a comprehensive manner.

Troubled areas can become a hotbed for terrorism. The international community should contribute to peace building in areas that are unable to stand on their own. The national defense plan, which is to be revised at the end of this year, should mention that Japan as a leading country is responsible for taking part in international cooperation activities.

SCHIEFFER